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Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 02726 040844Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /050 W
----------097808 040848Z /17
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 266
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, SOPN, KS, US
SUBJECT:BLUE HOUSE BUGGING: PRESS COVERAGE

REF: SEOUL 2686 (NOTAL)

1. LARGE HEADLINE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE WITH HEADLINES SUCH AS "PORTER CONFIRMS BUGGING DEVICE AT CHONG WA DAE". MOST CONSISTENT VERSIONS OF PORTER STATEMENT CARRIED BY AP/HAPTONG AND CORRESPONDENTS AS FOLLOWS: I HEARD THAT THE BUGGING HAD BEEN SUSPENDED BEFORE I ARRIVED IN SEOUL IN 1967 AND THE BUGGING DEVICE WAS INOPERABLE. AFTER I ASSUMED MY POSITION AS AMB, I GAVE A SPECIAL ORDER NOT TO RESUME THE BUGGING BECAUSE I FELT THE BUGGING WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE VALUE OF INFORMATION WHICH WOULD BE OBTAINED.

2. SLIGHT VARIATIONS IN INDIVIDUAL PAPERS DUE TO DIFFERENT SOURCES (E.G. SINA ILBO QUOTES WASH POST). MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN CHUNGANG ILBO PIECE QUOTING PORTER, "I RECEIVED A REPORT THAT THE BUGGING WAS SUSPENDED."

3. MOST (NOT ALL) PRESS CARRY REUTERS AS FOLLOWS:
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02726 040844Z

"DOS REFUSED TO COMMENT ON PORTER'S STATEMENT." ONLY CHUNGANG ILBO HAS DOS SPOKESMAN RESTON STATEMENT: "WHAT DOS SAID LAST SUMMER IS STILL OFFICIAL REPLY OF USG ON THE ISSUE." CHUNGANG ADDS (1) RESTON REFUSED TO CONFIRM OR DENY PORTER'S STATEMENT; (2) USG POSITION WAS CONTAINED IN CIA DIRECTOR TURNER'S 1977 STATEMENT THAT NO U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CONDUCTED ANY

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

EAVESDROPPING.

4. APRIL 4 MEETING OF FORMIN AND CHARGE STERN PROMINENTLY COVERED WITH PHOTOS. TONGA ILBO QUOTES FORMIN: "CONTENTS OF PORTER'S STATEMENT CONCERNING BUGGING, IF TRUE, IS AN ILLEGAL ACT VIOLATING SOVEREIGNTY OF OUR NATION. I CANNOT REFRAIN FROM BEING SHOCKED." FORMIN REPORTEDLY DEMANDED FULL DISCLOSURE OF FACTS AND OPEN EXPLANATION. CHARGE STERN QUOTED: "I DON'T KNOW AT THIS TIME EXACTLY WHAT MR. PORTER SAID BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A TELEGRAM YET BUT THE OFFICIAL DOS POSITION AS CLEARLY EXPLAINED BY DOS OFFICIAL AND U.S. AMB TO KOREA IS THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN INSTANCE OF BUGGING CHONG WA DAE."

5. SELECTED KOREAN COMMENTS: "GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT... SUCH AN IMMORAL ACT...UNFORTUNATE FOR US SHOUTING FOR MORAL POLITICS" (DRP SPOKESMAN PAK CHOL); "SHOCKING... WE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT FOUNDATION OF US MORAL POLITICS" (YUCHONG HOE SPOKESMAN YI CHONG-SIK); "MORE THAN MORALITY OF BUGGING ITSELF, WE WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF (US/ROK RELATIONS) BECAUSE MUTUAL TRUST IS NEEDED" (NDP TEMPORARY SPOKESMAN HAN YONG-SU) NOTE: TONGA ILBO ONLY QUOTES HAN AS FOLLOWS: "WE CANNOT HELP BUT BLAME ROKG, BECUASE USG CANNOT TRUST ROKG"; "WE WORRY THAT KOREAN PEOPLE'S SENTIMENTS TOWARD US MAY BE AGGRAVATED" (YUCHUNGHOE'S CHUNG IL-YUNG); "ALTHOUGH US DENIES CONTACT WITH NORTH
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KOREA, LEARNING OF THIS CASE WE MUST BE VERY CAUTIONS" (DRP'S KANG BYUNG-KYU).
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EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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